



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10

1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 900
Seattle, Washington 98101-3140

July 18, 2008

Reply To:
Attn Of: ETPA-088

Ref: 03-004-NPS

Palmer L. Jenkins, Superintendent
Mountain Lakes Fishery Management Plan/EIS
North Cascades National Parks Service Complex
810 State Route 20
Sedro-Wooley, WA 98284-1239

Dear Mr. Jenkins:

The EPA has reviewed the final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the **Mountain Lakes Fishery Management Plan** (CEQ No. 20050203) for the North Cascades National Park Service Complex in accordance with our responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

The Final EIS evaluates a range of alternatives and management actions for 91 mountain lakes in the North Cascades National Park Complex (The Complex) in Washington. The FEIS analyzes a no-action alternative, and three action alternatives. Through this analysis, Alternative B: "Proposed Adaptive Management of 91 Lakes Under a New Framework (42 Lakes May Have Fish)" was identified as the preferred alternative to guide fisheries management for a period of 15 years. However, the National Park Service (NPS) has determined it does not have the authority to implement alternative B. If Congress does not provide this authority by summer 2009, the NPS will implement "Alternative D: 91 Lakes Would be Fishless."

In our August 24, 2005 comments on the Draft EIS, we indicated support for the goals of the proposed project to conserve native biological integrity, provide a spectrum of recreational opportunities and visitor experiences, and resolve the debate and conflicts over fish stocking in North Cascades National Park Service Complex. Within that context we raised concerns over potential ecological implications of the Preferred Alternative (Alternative B), which would allow for continued stocking of naturally fishless lakes. We appreciate the effort taken by you and your staff to respond to our concerns. The referenced studies conducted by Liss and Larson are testament to the complexity of biotic and abiotic interactions occurring within the Mountain Lakes ecosystem, and it is clear that there are multiple factors affecting the interaction between plankton, macroinvertebrates, amphibians, and fish populations. By applying the ecological risk factors identified in Table ES-1, the proposed adaptive management strategy, and the proposed monitoring strategy, we anticipate that the preferred alternative will meet the identified objectives of the Plan. However, should the NPS not receive Congressional authority to pursue Alternative B; we continue to support the adoption of Alternative D as the "Environmentally Preferred Alternative."

Thank you for the opportunity to review this final EIS. If you have questions or comments, please contact Teresa Kubo (503) 326-2859 or myself at (206) 553-1601.

Sincerely,

/s/

Christine Reichgott, Manager
NEPA Review Unit